# Identity Crisis and Ideology: The Case of Meiji Japan

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**Abstract**

Throughout much of its modern history, the Japanese people have spent much time and effort in search of their identity. Despite the efforts to define and redefine themselves, they have suffered from bouts of anxiety regarding their identity that has regularly culminated in identity crises. The focal point in the crisis of Japanese identity is whether modern Japan is a part of the Occident, or the Orient. This ambiguity began in the late nineteenth century, when Japan embarked on a frenzied path of Westernization to "escape from Asia." Based on Erik Erikson's psycho-historical approach, this article examines the reasons for the Japanese identity crisis and what modern Japan and Japanese intellectuals have done in response to this crisis. This article is divided into four sections. It begins with a description of identity crisis and ideology. The article then examines how the Japanese suffered from serious inner crises and breakdowns during the Meiji years. The second section consists of a discussion about Japan's embrace of the ideology of Pan-Asianism to resolve its identity crisis and to redefine its identity through Asian traditions and values. The third section takes a critical look at Pan-Asianism with its propensity for asserting Japanese power and superiority in Asia and its slogans that justify Japanese aggression in Asia. The final section offers some reflections on major implications of Pan-Asianism for the future of Japanese identity. It is concluded that there will be continuous challenges for Japan to form new identities in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Erikson's Psycho-historical Approach, Identity, Identity Crisis, Ideology, Meiji Japan, Pan-Asianism

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout much of modern history, the Japanese have spent a great deal of time and effort in search of their identity. As Katō Shūichi [1976: 8] the leading thinker of twentieth-century Japan, defines that if there is one enduring trait that characterizes the Japanese, "the Japanese are a people who continuously and tirelessly ask who are the Japanese," it is that the question "who are the Japanese" never dies out among them. It might be said, therefore, that the Japanese have always been very conscious of their national identity. To be conscious of one's own nation is not bad; it is a virtue. However, what needs to be taken into consideration is Japan has suffered from bouts of anxiety regarding its identity that regularly culminated in identity crisis. Despite their great efforts to define and redefine themselves, Japan seems to have failed to develop a stable and secure identity. It is likely that Japan has been frustrated with the difficulty of coming to terms with its identity problem.

There has been considerable discussion of the crisis of Japanese identity. The central discussion of it is about whether modern Japan has been part of the West, or rather of Asia: "Japan vacillated between insisting on being not Asian at all, and declaring itself the epitome of Asianness" [McCormack 2001: 159]. In general, it has been argued that Japan has been neither fully Western nor fully Asian. This ambiguity of Japanese identity began in the late nineteenth century when Japan opened itself to the Western world, bringing to an end more than two centuries of seclusion, and embarked on a frenzied path of Westernization and escape from Asia (Datsu-a ron). Indeed, when Japan faced the mighty Western powers and civilization, establishing its secure identity in such a totally alien environment and a Darwinian struggle for survival was certainly a traumatic experience for Japanese. In the process of redefining its identity within the Western-referenced world order, Japan became plagued with an obsession with Westernization on the other hand, and it considered its Asian neighbors to be backward and to be cast off on the one hand. Paradoxically, however, Japan's both quest for Westernization and rejection of identification with backward Asia became one of the most important sources of Japanese identity crisis.

This article is not so much in the conventional question of how modern Japanese identity crisis had occurred, but rather in the deeper and theoretically more important question of why identity crisis had occurred. The fact of modern Japanese identity crisis is not the issue of my article; explaining identity crisis is what this article is all about. Then, more importantly, the aim of this article examines what modern Japan was activated in response to the identity crisis, or what Japanese intellectuals stepped forward. Exclusive attention is paid to Pan-Asianism, which was once a remedy of the identity crisis of the Japanese concerning their overindulgent Westernization and existence between Asia and the West. In order to answer why modern Japan's identity crisis had taken place and what ideology Japanese intellectuals had in reserve, this article falls back upon Erik Erikson's psycho-historical approach, particularly suited to the purpose of explaining modern Japan's identity crisis and its response.

This article is structured in four sections. The article begins with a description of identity crisis and ideology. I draw the outlines of my subject from Erik Erikson's psycho-historical approach of the relation between identity crisis and ideology. It then examines how seriously Japan's pre-modern identity had been undermined by the all-out Westernization and escape from Asia of the Meiji years. It was during these years that Japanese were to suffer from inner crisis and breakdowns. This is followed by a discussion of Pan-Asianism as Japan's ideology to resolve identity crisis. It is argued that Pan-Asianists provided foundation of Asian unity and regional identity so as to define Japan's identity in the conditions of the Asian tradition and value. The penultimate section provides a critical look at Pan-Asianism and views Pan-Asianism as ambiguous about a regional identity and unity because it had a propensity for Japan to claim ascendancy and superiority in Asia. The final section offers some reflections on some of the conspicuous remarks of Pan-Asianism for the future of Japanese identity.



## 2. Identity Crisis Defined

Before going on to these matters, some definition of identity crisis and ideology is essential. The study of identity crisis owes its initial impetus to disorder, crisis, anomie, and hysteria set in motion in the late nineteenth and early twenty centuries. In these periods, Emile Durkheim's The Division of Labor in Society [1893], Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer's Studies on Hysteria [1895], and George Mead Mind, Self and Society [1934] provided important conceptual antecedents of identity crisis. The study of identity crisis as a serious social science enterprise, in particular, was largely Erik Erikson's contribution following World War II. Since its initial formulation in Erikson's writings such as Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History [1958] and Identity, Youth, and Crisis [1968], the concept of identity crisis has come into use by many scholars from various disciplines. In other words, Erikson as the psychotherapist cum social-science observer gave "identity crisis" a central place in identity theory of a number of disciplines and brought the term into common usage.

Social psychologists, for instance, have generally tended to study identity crisis in terms of inner processes. The dynamic source of identity crisis is attributed to a human bio-psychological disorder occurring when ambiguities and uncertainties appear and human life cannot be rendered more meaningful and manageable. Sociologists conceptualize identity crisis as psychological conditions lacking not only shared beliefs and sentiments that unite peoples and comfort them by alleviating uncertainties but social norms that maintain the social order. It is likely to be a dearth of "collective conscience" which means the glue of dissimilar individuals of the same community which "connects successive generations with one another." Political scientists have studied identity crisis as an important political phenomenon taking place in state formation, nation building process and modernization. Common to these disciplines is the notion that identity crisis is a psychological phenomenon of absence of a "deeper cultural code of meanings that relate the individual to the most general level of national and social meanings" [Weigert, Andrew, Smith Teitge, and Dennis Teitge 1986: 27-28].

It is obvious that Erik Erikson's works provided varied disciplines with some insight to make clear the term of identity crisis. In association with the different psychological configurations of identity formation through the life cycle, Erikson paid a particular attention to the period of adolescence when the young individual has most dramatically and explicitly to integrate her/his own inner drives with the expectations of society. It is this period of adolescence which provided for Erikson what was a caricature of the inner and outer forces at work. In a diagrammatic representation of the stages in the life cycle, he characterized the major feature of adolescence as being identity crisis. He maintained that ambiguities and uncertainties of circumstance surrounding the young person and a failure to link her/himself to a cultural code of social meanings within a society lead to identity crisis or psychosocial moratorium. According to him, therefore, this is such a generally recognized phenomenon that adolescents are given identity crisis while the youth is allowed to find her/himself. The identity crisis might be countered by an adaptive reaction in which a new synthesis of identifications or a new identity formation is made appropriate to the situation and its constraints. Without this adaptation, there would be ongoing crisis and the non-resolution of this dynamic is a distressed pathological state.

With a particular focus on the problems of new identity construction in adolescence, the other thrust of Erikson's written work was to demonstrate that an identity formation is an ongoing negotiating

process from infancy through adolescence and middle age to old age so as to enhance physical and psychological survival, security, and well-being. In this process the self attempts, especially in those problematic moments of ambiguity and crisis, to secure an identity that others do not bestow while others attempt to bestow an identity that the self does not appropriate. The construction of identity therefore is an ongoing, progressive and adaptive process inherent within each human.

According to this adaptation of Erikson, a change of historical circumstances—e.g. in the Japanese case, the confrontation with the West, the rapid Westernization, and the escape from Asia et al.—would trigger the nation's identity crisis by removing and altering the traditional value or ideology which provided the nation with legitimacy and authority. In other words, as Pye [1974: 110-111] and Bloom [1990: 37] put it, in the process of historical transformation of a nation an identity crisis occurs when a nation finds that what it had once unquestionably accepted as the physical and psychological definitions of its collective self are no longer acceptable under new historic conditions. In order for a nation to achieve a new level of performance, it is necessary for the participants in a nation to redefine who they are and how they are different from all other political communities. Therefore, there is a psychological dynamic of a nation not only to protect and enhance identifications already made, but also to make adaptive identifications and construct new identity. The inability of a nation to synthesize the changing historical configurations and to form the new identity, however, continues to lead to identity crisis—from fear to acutely disabling paranoid, psychopathic and depressive disorder.

## 3. Ideology Described

In contrast to a political connotation referring to totalitarian systems of thought which distort historical truth or Marx and Engels' [1970: 47, 65-66] definition indicating an inversion of reality and a product of false consciousness, Erikson [1958: 20] defines ideology as "an unconscious tendency underlying religious and scientific as well as political thought: the tendency at a given time to make facts amenable to ideas, and ideas to facts, in order to create a world image convincing enough to support the collective and the individual sense of identity. Far from being arbitrary or consciously manageable (although it is as exploitable as all of man's unconscious strivings), the total perspective created by ideological simplification reveals its strength by the dominance it exerts on the seeming logic of historical events, and by its influence on the identity formation of individuals (and thus on their 'ego-strength')." It makes available the essential circumstance for the next upper mode of identification with it, influencing on the new identity formation of the nation. An ideology might bridge a political and psychological vacuum which history has created; to some new synthesis of past and future—a synthesis which must include but transcend the past.

Erikson [1958: 38-39] viewed "ideology" as a significant concept in identity formation, in association with the phrase "identity crisis." The ideology is bound up with the question of identity crisis and the construction of new identity. Erikson's concern with the conditions leading to the formation of new identity by overcoming identity crisis guides him to the study of ideology. Since he observes ideology in the context of identity crisis and identity formation, Erikson contributes a great deal to the understanding of how ideology plays a role in resolving identity crisis and creating new identity. His formulation helps us understand how ideology helps to deal with the identity crisis and satisfies the identity formation. Powerful ideology and creative ideologists do much to deal with identity crisis. That is why the role of ideology is central to formation of new identity. Based on Erikson's formation, I am inclined to the view that ideology helps to perform two main functions: one directly social, binding the community together, and the other individual, organizing the role personalities of the maturing individual.



In order to overcome identity crisis and establish its new identity, every nation seems to seek to create ideology [Sheehan 1993] because ideology offers to the members of nation determined answers to those vague inner stages and those urgent questions which arise in consequence of identity crisis. Ideology renders social life significant for those who suffer from identity crisis. Ideology provides "maps of problematic social reality" without which the societal arrangement would seem meaningless and the individual's place in it unclear [Geertz 1973: 216-220]. Any impression that such maps correspond in some geodetic way to the social topography of a given period, however, is misleading. Ideology not only reflects and interprets the social realities that sustain them; it also, in Berger and Luckmann's [1966: 123-128] term, constructs those realities and remains in constant dialectical relationship with them. Ideology links particular actions and mundane practices with a wider set of meanings and, by helping to form new identity, lends a more honorable and dignified complexion to social conduct. Ideology is also viewed as a cloak for sharply motives and appearances. "Ideology" is a generic term applied to general ideas potent in specific situations of conduct. Because it is the link between action and fundamental belief, ideology helps to make more explicit the formation of new identity [Apter 1964: 16-17].

Ideology functions to solve identity crisis by building its bonds of affect, social commitment, and historical perspective [Sorel 1950]. Ideology, like language and dreams, is related to morphologies of behavior by universal psychobiological variables. The resolution of identity crisis and the formation of new identity are the desired results of ideological behavior. Ideology helps men to resolve identity crisis and form new identity by controlling and changing their environment. Such ideology arises out of action rather than out of pure speculation [Apter 1964: 20-21].

Since different people construe their world differently, there is always a multiplicity of ideological formations to solve identity crisis within a nation—e.g. in Japan Shintoism, Emperorism, nationalism, Pan-Asianism etc.. The question then arises, which—or whose—set of values and meanings becomes dominant. Gramsci's [1971: 12-13] conception of hegemony recognizes that when a social group is successful in persuading others of the validity of its own world view, force does not greatly exceed consent. The consent, moreover, permeates the society through the disseminating institutions that to many it seems commonsensical and natural. These disseminating institutions, both public and private,—for example, news articles, journals, associations, and school—help to construct a shared ideological universe. Ideological formation is not singular and static but plural and dynamic in that "there are not only continuities and persistent determinations but also tensions, conflicts, resolutions and irresolutions, innovations and actual changes" [Williams 1982: 29]. In the meantime, if the new ideology were not enough to deal with the identity crisis, then the nation identity's breakdown would ensue. Whether or not such identity crisis continues to damage a nation depends upon the extent to which the ideology is able to deal with the identity crisis. Nonetheless, ideology is essentially a psychological function, but its clothing will vary from historical circumstances to historical circumstances: nor is this to gainsay that ideology can be deliberately created, manipulated, or appropriated [Bloom 1990: 38-39].

## 4. The Japanese Illustration: Identity Crisis and Pan-Asianism in the Meiji Period

Throughout the history, ocean winds and currents, geography and distance, and, more importantly, its own self-perception, all seemed to work together to leave Japan insular, secluded and inward-looking and to develop and preserve a unique culture. Because of these factors, a good deal of scholars [Huntington 1993; Watanabe 1994; Arano 1988; Toby 1984; Tsurumi 1986; Inoguchi 1993, 2005; Umehara 1991; Ito

1999] argue that Japan has had a tendency to establish a distinctive identity on the Japanese archipelago by distancing itself from the Asian international order. Suffice it to say, however, that we should not overemphasize the Japanese unique, secluded, and distinctive identity. Whether Japan has been engaging with or disengaging from the traditional Asian international order, geographic realities, historical connections, and cultural impact had put the range of geographic Asia at the center of Japan's pre-modern identity. In other words, although Japan had developed its own distinctive identity helped by a natural geographical distance, thorough modification of the Chinese concepts—so-called Japanization—and her own self-awareness, Japan's pre-modern identity was not entirely free from Asia, because of historical ties, and because Japan had benefited culturally and intellectually from its interactions with the continent [Scalapino 1964: 93-97]. Asia was one of sources for Japan's pre-modern identity, its writing system, its cultural values in literature, philosophy, and thought, its Bushido, and its institutional examples in government and law. Therefore, no emphasis on distinctiveness may be permitted to obscure the fact that Japan was Asian in outlook and values. While distinctiveness could exist, as Maruyama Masao [Quoted in Jansen 1965: 48] argues, the basic classification through which the Japanese of that day saw their world and the primary way which the Japanese defined themselves were Confucian.

No cataclysmic crisis until the early nineteenth century had yet appeared to challenge the base of the pre-modern identity in Japan. It was Commodore Matthew Perry's coercive naval diplomacy of 1853, however, that led Japan to depart decisively from the source of the pre-modern identity, to relinquish unfalteringly its remaining attachment to Asia, to think profoundly who Japanese were, and, more importantly, to cause enormously its identity crisis [Jansen 1965: 54-55; Oka 1961: 14-16]. Indeed, the newcomers in Meiji period were not as docile as the Dutch with whom Japan continued to get in touch in Nagasaki in Tokugawa days. The nineteenth-century international order that Japan encountered was one characterized by European colonialism and the racial and cultural superiority of Europeans. It was clear that international order, now dominated by the West, was something of a jungle in which countries were friendly in the sun but hostile in the shade. Thus this period cliché about Western powers was "ravenous wolves." Western-style Westphalian international order was non-traditional in that they came by sea, they discredited the traditional Asian international order, and they forced to emerge new thoughts and ideas, and to lead to Japanese identity crisis [Jansen 1980: 43-44, 53-60; Steffensen 2000: 141-142]. This external threat to the traditional Asian international order and to the pre-modern Japanese thoughts and way of life was the most powerful influence on Japanese identity crisis. Because Asia had played such a central role in Japanese pre-modern identity, the fact that the traditional Asian international order was clearly in process of dissolution was an important factor in the collapse of the pre-modern Japanese identity.

**4.1. The Obsession with Westernization**

Modernization meant Westernization. Accordingly, what was new was foreign—the most important single fact in connection with the problem of Japanese identity. Direct resistance to the West was immediately regarded to be futile and dangerous, because it could only result in devastation. The ultimate goal of Japanese leaders—a party within Japan's warrior aristocracy—was the protection of Japan's autonomy. Because the remaining choice was to modernize and to westernize Japan by emulating Western techniques, institutions, and thoughts, Japanese leaders were extraordinarily receptive to Westernization, occasionally to imbecile extremes, even though later they indeed restored Japanese emperor and revitalized Shintoism. In 1868, the Meiji Japanese leaders therefore embarked upon a revolutionary program which established a new political and social order inspired by the civilization of their Western challengers and, paradoxically, led deeply to Japanese identity crisis by impairing pre-modern Japanese identity. Indeed, no one seriously questioned that most of the secrets necessary for national survival and strength were to be found in the West. They accepted without serious reservation the idea that emulation would produce better results in Japan and, furthermore, modern progress required the near total Westernization of Japanese society. Because the West was the only model of modernization, the Meiji leaders naturally assumed that the Westernization process in Japan must proceed along these same lines of development [Hotta 2007: 53-54; Jansen 1984: 62-64].



Indeed, Japan was a keen student of the West. The Iwakura mission of 1871-73 showed how Japan's attitude was that of a willing pupil. The Iwakura mission provided the Meiji leaders with a twenty-one-month world tour during which they had the opportunity to see for themselves. The mission, most of all, sought to demonstrate Japan's acceptance of its place in the new international order, traveling to the United States and the several European powers. The previous conception of the Asian international order and the preceding Japan's pre-modern identity became subject to fundamental rethinking, consequently. Japan was engaged in a serious endeavor to adjust its identity and adopt its behavior appropriate to the Eurocentric international order in order to be accepted as one of its full members [Suganami 1989: 191-2; Jansen 1980: 53-60].

The Westernization movement of the 1870s-80s in Japan represented the high-water mark of admiration for the institutions and manners of the West. The admiration of the Western civilization and the initial desire for Westernizing reforms to strengthen the Japanese state were superseded by an obsession with the Westernization [Hirakawa 1998: 47-71]. Mutsu Munemitsu, returning from Europe in 1886, for instance, said it would be necessary to change everything, from the concrete things of daily life such as clothing, food, and houses to intangibles like education and morals [Jansen, 1980: 68-71]. Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru also put it in 1887: "Let us change our empire into a European-style people. Let us create a new European-style empire on the Eastern sea" [Quoted in Watanabe 1938: 56]. Furthermore, in this period some intellectuals and political leaders hoped for a spiritual revolution that would go beyond institutional change to reform basic habits of thought and reshape patterns of behavior. Kozaki Hiromichi, for example, wrote in 1887 that "we must rid ourselves of Oriental traits," adding "I hope we shall learn all of the ways of the West. We must not, in this progressive reform movement, simply adopt the externals of Western customs; we must go further and reform people's minds as well" [Kokumin no tomo June 14, 1887: 33].

The most widely recognized advocates for the Westernization in this period were Tokutomi Sohō. Tokutomi, who ironically later became a staunch anti-Westernist, captured the imagination of many Japanese youth by expressing their enthusiasm for building a progressive Western society in Japan. Tokutomi was convinced that the adoption of Western ethics and values was imperative for Japan's progress as a civilization [Pyle 1969: 24-25]. Tokutomi triumphantly proclaimed his own: "Japanese education must be wholly Western." The material and spiritual aspects of Western society, he emphasized, were indivisible. Tokutomi called on youth to reject the traditional traits of the Japanese people, traits that were the legacy of Japan's long feudal experiences: they should shun unprogressive and acquiescence characteristics, avoid social indifference, and overcome irrationality. Youth should, rather, emulate the qualities found in the liberal, democratic societies of the West: they should develop progressive and innovative natures and become self-reliant, responsible, logical, and scientific [Tokutomi 1930: 7-9]. The ideas Tokutomi expressed in Youth of the New Japan published in 1885 evinced a profound alienation from his country's traditions and cultural heritage. Japan's past seemed to him devoid of the ingredients necessary in modern society. Whereas most Japanese regarded as inevitable that Japanese institutions, techniques,

and values would have to be modified, he believed they had to be wholly displaced. He was impatient with compromises and halfway measures in the process of Westernization [Pyle 1969: 35-36].

**4.2. Leave Asia and Join the West**

The conspicuous manifestation of the fervor to Westernization was extreme revulsion toward traditional Asian international relations, values, and ideas along with the dominant belief in the superiority of Western civilization. It seemed that Westernization required discarding traditional international relationship with Asian neighbors in favor of their Western counterparts. A good example of this attitude is comprehensively demonstrated in the impression Itagaki Taisuke recorded in 1883 after a trip to Europe. He expressed resignation that Westerners would always regard Japan as "Asian": "Consider, for example, a primitive [yaban] country. Some of its people are intelligent, but because the majority are not, the country is inevitably called primitive. In the same way, no matter how far Japan progresses, no matter how enlightened she becomes, just because the great majority of people in other Asian countries are ignorant and primitive, the whole of Asia is considered primitive" [Quoted in Matsumoto 1961: 95].

Therefore, the Meiji Japanese leaders tried to dissociate Japan's identity from the continent so that the newly civilizing and rapidly modernizing Japan could not be lumped together with the despotic and decadent neighbors within the club of civilized nations called the West. Meiji educator Fukuzawa Yukichi [1973: 133] who published a widely noted piece called "Casting off Asia" (Datsu-a ron) in March 1885 explained:

> To plan our course now, therefore, our country cannot afford to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors and to cooperate in building Asia up. Rather we should leave their ranks to join the camp of the civilized countries of the West. Even when dealing with China and Korea, we need not have special scruples simply because they are our neighbors, but should behave towards them as the Westerners do. One who befriends an evil person cannot avoid being involved in his notoriety. In spirit, then, we break with our evil friends of Eastern Asia.

This argument sought to separate the identity of Japan, which was progressing rapidly toward civilization, from that of the rest of Asia, which seemed to lag far behind. After having been looked down upon by the Western powers at the beginning of its career as a major player on the international scene, Japan in turn tended to treat its Asian neighbors with a sort of disdain because in the nineteenth century Asia was considered to be synonymous with backwardness [Klien 2002: 23; Steffensen 2000: 142-143; Inoguchi 2005: 13; Hatsuse 1984: 32-38; Oka 1961: 35-46]. Furthermore, wood-block prints from the 1890s had described Japanese soldiers as more Caucasian than their Chinese foes [Hatch 2010: 388] and Taguchi Ukichi in 1904 right before Russo-Japanese War claimed that Japanese was not Yellow race [Oguma 1995: 174-176]. These reflected not only an acceptance of the notion of Western superiority, an internalization of Orientalism and an identification of itself within the Eurocentric international order, but also a rejection of Asia identified with a past that Japan wished to leave behind on the other.

**4.3. Identity and Schizophrenia**

The revolutionary transformation of Japan from a weak, feudal, and agrarian country into a modern industrial power—economically and militarily capable of resisting foreign domination—seemed to be very successful. Equally as impressive was the speed with which most Japanese surrendered their pre-modern identity and commitments to traditional relationship with Asian neighbors [Cohen 2000: 286-287]. A major survey of modern world history concludes that the change undergone by Japan in the



Meiji period "still stands as the most remarkable transformation ever undergone by any people in so short a time" [Palmer and Colton 1961: 554]. Japan won a reputation among the Western Powers as a civilized nation, deeply impressing Westerners, and consequently being accepted as a 'special status, which set Japan distinctly apart from the rest of the non-white world' [Winter 1974: 185; Steffensen 2000: 143; Muto 2001: 174]. European newsarticles and journals, for example, began to depict Japan which was "dynamic, developed rapidly, had adopted European political institutions, and behaved like a proud European country" [Korhonen 1997: 351] as the singular successful case of Westernization and reform on the larger Asian continent, which overall was failing to reform itself. Even some European authors felt they had to examine Japan to rethink whether its achievements could teach European states anything [Dyer 1904].

In spite of the fact that such passions to adopt Western civilization, to identify itself with the West, and to distance the Asia led to remarkable achievements within a short period, paradoxically this period was full of contradictions, confusion, and identity crisis. Although this revolution upon which the Meiji leadership embarked in 1868 saved Japan from national disaster such as was experienced nearly everywhere else in Asia, it exacted a fearful cost in historical and cultural dislocation, and thus in psychological strain, identity crisis. It caused the generation who was growing up amidst this revolutionary social and cultural transformation to endure extraordinary mental agonies. As Hatayama [1891: 26-27] pointed out, Meiji Japan was indeed as sick nation because of its mania for Westernization and escape from Asia. For many Japanese in this period of intense national consciousness, alienation from their own pre-modern identity posed perplexing dilemmas. In other words, (1) the Westernization and (2) the identification as part of the West affected Japanese to the core of their being: they lost their self-esteem and suffered from all the psychological throes.

Firstly, the underlying cause of Japanese identity crisis was the threat of absorption or destruction by the West. Because of threat, an essentially elite abandoned traditional values and turned with great seriousness to the task of Westernizing the nation. Japanese, however, were troubled by the implications of the Westernization, for the very Westernization they sought had in some sense to be regarded as alien in origin. They were in fact painfully sensitive to the self-effacement that cultural borrowing implied. They saw in Westernization the destruction of pre-modern Japanese identity [Pyle 1969: 3-4]. For instance, Kozaki Hiromichi [1933: 36-37], who became a leading Christian educator, tells in his autobiography of the mental agony he suffered as a young man: "The year and a half spent as a Christian inquirer is the unhappiest period of my life. The rational part of me rebelled against taking the decisive step; yet to turn away from Christianity and be content with Confucianism would leave my spirit of inquiry unsatisfied. This dilemma so wrought on me that I had a nervous breakdown." The attempt to live according to new values that were "not insensibly acquired in childhood as part of the natural order of things, but learned, usually late, as part of a self-conscious quest for appropriate forms of behavior" was often distressing.

Erwin Baelz [1932: 17], a German doctor who arrived in Japan in 1876 to teach at Tokyo University and watched the Japanese undergo their psychological disturances, refers to in his diary the embarrassment and stress he discovered among his students over their cultural heritage:

> But (and here I come to the strangest feature of the situation) the Japanese have their eyes fixed exclusively on the future, and are impatient when a word is said of their past. The cultured among them are actually ashamed of it. "That was in the days of barbarian," said one of them in my hearing. Another, when I asked about Japanese history, bluntly rejoined: "We have no history. Our history begins today." Others have smiled in an embarrassed way when I have asked them such questions, and did not thaw until they at length came to realize that I had a genuine interest in the matter.

As Tokutomi Sohō [1935: 109-111] and the brooding Kitamura Tokoku [Mathy 1963: 1-28] point out, the melancholia, mental turmoil and mental sickness (nobyo) were widespread among students in the 1870s and 1880s. Since the old Japan collapsed, but the new Japan rose not yet, Japanese had no sure sense of their identity. Japanese were likely to wander in confusion through a deep fog, unable to find their way. Thus, there was already discernible in them a clear sense of identity crisis, which illustrated the psychological strains many Japanese were beginning to feel, caught as they were in the rapid transition from old to new and the pull between native tradition and modern values associated with the West [Reischauer 1964: 157-158].

It was the historical predicament to be caught in a confrontation of circumstances that intensified the awareness of their heritage and at the same time stigmatized it. Traditional skills became outdated; old ways of organizing and viewing social life became problematic and controversial. This process, entailing as it did a sudden loss of trust in the immediate world and in its transmitters and interpreters, left Japanese with identity crisis. In other words, serious problems of identity were created by this conflict of historical experience and transformative period.

Secondly, Japan took paradoxical attitude that even though it was geographically located in Asia, it denied belonging to it. As Oguma [2007: 211] notes, "Asia" for Japan was less a geographical term or any strictly defined term at all. Japanese therefore attempted to identify themselves as part of the modern Western world that functioned in a Western framework. Japanese kept their Asian look, but Japanese wished to see themselves as part of the modern Western world conceptualized in Western terms. This identification as part of the West forced Japan to be imprisoned between the East and the West, and disturbed intensely and continuously its identity [Wagatsuma 1967: 407-443]. In other words, Japan's position as an Asian country that joined the ranks of the industrialized Western world at a relatively early stage preconditioned it for being faced with the very fundamental identity question to which continent it truly belonged.

As a matter of fact, by taking the way to leave Asia, Japan came to be obsessed with being part of the West. Needless to say, the obsession to join the West and distance from Asia led to, and deepened, the Japanese identity crisis from fear, frustration and suspicion to paranoid disarray and schizophrenia because Japan was not accepted as a genuine member of the Western community owing to its race [Tamamoto 2003: 204]. What intensified identity crisis was that, despite Japan's civilized status and proven record of Westernization, Japanese people continued to face discrimination on the basis of their identification with the yellow race and Asian culture and Japan was hypocritically excluded from the Western community in the context of the permanent racial and civilizational superiority of the West over "yellow race" Asians.

As even Tokutomi Sohō, once Western-inspired reformist figure, for example, wrote, "despite having become the most progressive, civilized, and powerful nation in the Orient and joining the West by distancing from Asia, Japan had to endure the scorn of the white people" [Quoted in Pierson 1980: 229, 235] and to adapt to view itself as victimized by the West. Indeed, the West did not abandon the basic black/white dichotomy of Orientalism and its hierarchical positioning of the West and East. No matter the success rate of Japanese reforms, therefore, Japan as non-Christian and non-white nation would never perfectly fulfill all the required standards of civilization because of defects in its racial identity and makeup, or cultural character. It was obvious that Western humanistic values were not meant for universal application. Self-determination, justice, equality and individualism all proved to be nothing but a false consciousness for the pursuit of national interests by the Western powers [Kano 1976: 9-10]. For example, an editorial in Kokumin no tomo in late 1893 entailed "Japan's Talent for Assimilation" complained that



Westerners' praise of Japan for her swift adoption of Western civilization was unflattering and condescending: "They regard us as only a step above Fiji or Hawaii. They praised Japan only because they were accustomed to comparing her to Siam and Annam" [Kokumin no tomo Oct. 23, 1893]. Despite Japan's great progress in adopting civilized institutions and in developing its national strength, Japan could not escape the scorn of white people. It turned out, furthermore, that Japan was traumatized and frustrated by the 1895 Triple Intervention when France, Russia and Germany robbed Japan of the fruits of her victory over China. The Japanese public was outraged, but the Japanese leaders were not ready to challenge the Europeans. The Japanese would not forget. The Triple Intervention therefore completed Japanese disillusionment. This event had a momentous impact on the psychology of Japanese, who had once made a significant turn away from Asia and searched for their identity in the West by pursuing joining the West [Aydin 2007: 151; Miwa 1973: 188-189]. The psychological result of this intolerable discrimination was a sense of humiliation, suspicion, fear, frustration and insecurity, which led to the notion that Japan was in identity crisis. As a consequence, suspicion and fear of the West and Japan's frustration and insecurity came to an integral part of modern Japanese identity crisis.

## 5. Pan-Asianism: Antidote of Identity Crisis

Since its beginning with Japan's opening to the world, one of the primary goals of Japanese had been to establish its identity in an alien world. Because the pre-modern Japanese identity within unstable geopolitical space and under the external threat was forced to be redefined, however, it turned out that Japan' s efforts to westernize itself and to redefine its identity within the Eurocentric international order proved a profoundly transformative psychological shock [Steffensen 2000: 141]. The struggles since the 1860s and the turmoil of Japan's own identity seem to have necessitated a more profound exploration of itself and its environment. Since ideology provides a nation with steadfast remedy to the psychological shock, the grave inner matters, and the ambiguity which take place in consequence of identity crisis, Japan sought naturally to construct ideology. Working out an ideology was for Japan a way of resolving the identity crisis. From the time Japan experienced its identity crisis, Japanese sought first to conceive and then to inculcate an ideology suitable for modern Japan. As a consequence, a number of competing or consolidating ideologies that had the effects of identity crisis appeared. Japanese elites opted for Shintoism, Emperorism, Japanese nationalism, and Pan-Asianism etc. as the dominant ideologies in a new modern nation. Those ideologies were socially created and absorbed, providing temporarily, to a large extent, antidote of troublesome reality in Japan.

Unlike other ideologies, Pan-Asianism (Dai-Ajiashugi) had a vision that a regional identity could somehow mediate between emergent nationalisms and provide a convincing counterargument to the challenge of western dominance. Pan-Asianism was a basis for efforts to resolve the identity crisis and construct its regional identity. It was also the antithesis of the government's foreign policy, which aimed at joining the West, while criticizing the Western imperial discourse and rejecting the Eurocentric claims to the universality of modern civilization and inclusiveness of the international relations. The main critique of Pan-Asianism was directed against the uncivilized and hypocritical acts and ideologies of European imperialism, which provoked the quest for regional identity [Takeuchi 1963: 23]. Even though it has faded from the contemporary historical imagination, in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early twenty centuries it had a powerful hold on elites around Asia, especially in Japan and India, and to some extent in China and Korea. Fuelled by a powerful idea of community between Asian nations defining themselves against the colonialist West and constructing regional identity, Pan-Asianism appeared to

have immense cultural power a century ago. Yet just a few decades later, it was distorted by the Japanese militarist government into a brutal ideology of imperialism which served as a cloak for expansionism and as a tool for legitimizing Japanese hegemony and colonial rule.

**5.1. The Concept of Pan-Asianism**

Pan-Asianism arose out of the identity crisis of Meiji Japan, attempting to find a regional identity through Asian cultural heritage. The Japanese intellectuals were burdened with moral obligations in providing a basis to resolve identity crisis. Their intellectual response to identity crisis was adherence to the indigenous value-institutional structure. This response fundamentally involved a complex attempt to reappropriate the Asia as a value-laden category and to redefine Japan in relation to it. In other words, their reaction was based on the belief that the Japanese share common physical traits with their continental neighbors, Koreans and Chinese, or that they belong to an Asian world system with historical roots. It was manifested in Pan-Asianism in the efforts to rediscover the ideals of the East, to develop the ideas of "same race and same culture" (dobun doshu), to awaken the East, to place Japan again in Asia so as to resolve its identity crisis. Parallel to these efforts, they developed notions of regional Asian identity as a counterpart to the Western claim for universality and in opposition to imperialist Eurocentric international order [Narangoa 2007: 52; McCormack 2001: 161-2; Aydin 2007: 8-9; Tamamoto 2003: 198; Miwa 2007: 21; Takeuchi 1963: 8-13, 22-23].

They advocated a "return to Asia" (Ajia kaiki). For them Asia, or the East (toyo), as a cultural, geographical and historical concept, was the spatial and temporal object through which Japanese defined themselves and a potential antidote to the crisis of identity that had resulted from the Westernization and the integration of Japan into the Eurocentric world. Pan-Asianism resorted to an imagined Asian past of great spiritual and geographical dimensions to legitimize their claims of regional identity. As a consequence, Pan-Asianism helped Japanese—as well as Chinese, Korean, and others—feel, for the first time, Asian [Koschmann 1997: 85; Saaler 2007: 2-3; Tanaka 1993: 77].

Many of the early Pan-Asianists, sharing strong feeling of identity crisis in the process of Westernization and escape from Asia, began their political activities in the Freedom and People's Rights movement, combining its criticism of Japan's foreign policy toward Asia with opposition to the elitist nondemocratic process of Westernization then under way at home. For example, Oi Kentaro, one of the leaders of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement of the 1870s and 1880s, called on Japan to remain, and define itself, in Asia and to support the reform and strengthening of Korea, pointing out that such an action would serve to promote the security and prosperity of the entire region. Oi Kentaro's vision of Asian solidarity contrasted with Fukuzawa's "Escape from Asia" argument [Aydin 2007: 34]. In 1893, prior to the Sino-Japanese War, Tarui Tōkichi [1964: 106-129; Hiraishi 1994: 271-275] in his "Federated states of great East (Daitō gappōron)" called for a federation of Japan and Korea. His idea, that the only hope for survival for the small Asian nations was in joining forces, reflected among the Japanese a perception concerning Japan's role and its identity in Asia. Above all, the most important organizations or figures of the early Pan-Asianism were Seikyosha, Toho kyokai, Miyazaki brothers, and Okakura Tenshin. Members of these organizations and these individuals were important publicists who sought to decline the Westernization and escape from Asia along with awareness of identity crisis. These Pan-Asianists found in Pan-Asianism a means of extricating themselves not only from their personal identity crisis, but a potent ideology to elucidate Japan and Asia's role in the modern world. They gave formulation of the essential basis of Asian unity and regional identity and attempted to redefine Japan's identity in the context of the Asian tradition and value by emphasizing Asia as a whole rather than Japan alone.



**5.1.1. *Seikyosha***

Seikyosha was one of the cruxes of Pan-Asianism. Seikyosha (Society for Political Education) led by Miyake Setsurei (1860-1945), Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927), and Kuga Katsunan (1857-1907) provided Japanese intellectuals with philosophical grounds to formulate a new regional identity by the assessment of Westernization and escape from Asia. They joined together in early 1888 to form the Seikyosha and published a series of popular periodicals, Nihonjin (the Japanese), Ajia (Asia), and Nihon oyobi Nihonjin (Japan and the Japanese). In fact, Seikyosha intellectuals, who had attended new Western-oriented schools from a young age, revealed a deeper consciousness of the complexity of Western thought and politics, having a close familiarity with the writings of Herbert Spencer, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Francois Guizot, Henry Buckle, and Thomas Carlyle. Thus they were, to a degree, attracted to the liberating elements of Western thought. But despite their knowledges of Western ideas, they chose to resist the headlong rush to Westernization and join of the West that many of their peers were embracing under similar circumstances. They objected to the prevailing tendency to prefer Western values over Asian ones. Their liberal backgrounds rather served as a wake-up call for Pan-Asianist consciousness because Seikyosha intellectuals were disturbed by the prevailing adulation of Western culture among large numbers of Japanese and were also painfully conscious of the psychological shocks and ominous nature of the trend toward Westernization and escape from Asia [Pyle 1969: 53-64]. The craze in Japan for Westernization and escape from Asia which George B. Sansom [1950: 475-476] described as "an almost fanatical phase" of popular sentiment in the 1870s and 1880s, reinforced the doubts these Seikyosha intellectuals had for Westernization and escape from Asia. To accept subservience to the West would cause, they believed, identity crisis. Kuga, for instance, was aware that in addition to drastic aggressive action, Western imperialism could come from a slower process of cultural and psychological encroachment. Hence he thought it the intellectual's duty to warn his countrymen of this crisis. Because Westernization and escape from Asia were taken as serious forces directly causing Japan's identity crisis, the Seikyosha members including Kuga felt compelled to deal with this identity crisis [Tam 1977: 191].

By drawing attention to the importance of an awareness of Asia as a cultural and ethnic unit, the Seikyosha members tried somehow to restore nourishing ties with the cultural Asian heritage from which they had been cut off. They attempted to redefine Japan's identity in the context of the Asian tradition in order to create a new identity. In other words, they sought to reevaluate Asian history and values, to find something in the past that they and the world could esteem and that need not be sacrificed in the course of Westernization, something by virtue of which they could define their uniqueness and thus feel themselves the equals of Westerners [Pyle 1969: 53-55]. For instance, Asia could offer, Seikyosha intellectuals argued, a development model different from, yet as good as, that of Western nations. Seikyosha intellectual Miyake Setsurei, in particular, in Shin-zen-bi Nihonjin (The Japanese: Truth, goodness, and beauty), a treatise written in 1891, accepted that the cultures of the Western nations were at the highest stage of civilization, but he argued that the Mongolian civilizations had developed along the Yellow River as equal in maturity and sophistication to Western civilization [Aydin 2007: 45-46]. Therefore, Seikyosha intellectuals believed that they had every reason to take pride in the early accomplishments of their Mongoloid peoples. Because Asia's past was the source of their distinctive identity, they pointed out, Japanese should esteem it rather than repudiate it [Pyle 1969: 150-156]. The greatness and legacy of Asian civilization had to be preserved in order to counter the adulation of Western civilization and overcome the identity crisis.

Meanwhile, they developed the concept of the kokusui (cultural essence of the nation) in order to defend indigenous Asian and Japanese tradition and value against the trend of Westernization and escape from Asia. They claimed that the promotion of the kokusui that they were aiming was of a universal

nature. Above all, the duty of the Seikyosha, they believed, was not in advocating the promotion of kokusui literally all over the world, but, more importantly, to advocate its promotion in Japan and in other Asian countries which were then not aware of their unique kokusui as well. To promote simultaneously the kokusui of Japan and Asia would awaken the Japanese to their glorious heritage, out of which the Japanese could develop a force to resist Westernization and escape from Asia. The promotion of kokusui in Asia as well as Japan as Japan's mission and duty became a common theme in Seikyosha [Tam 1977: 191-192].

**5.1.2. *The Oriental Society***

In the late 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, various organizations were formed to promote matters pertaining to Asia and to advocate Pan-Asianism. The Shina-kai (Promote Asia Society) and the Koa-Kai (Society for Raising Asia) were formed in Tokyo to promote knowledge about Asia in 1878 and 1880 respectively. The Ajia kyōkai (Asia Association), Koa-kai's successor organization, was established in 1883 [Teow 1999: 9]. In the meantime, determined to overcome what they believed was a debilitating preoccupation with Westernization and escape from Asia, Seikyosha members sought practical ways of developing a Japanese mission in world affairs. In 1890, they took the lead in forming a group called the Oriental Society (Toho kyokai), which they hoped would be instrumental in diverting Japan's primary attention from the West to her immediate surroundings in Asia. One indication of its success was the growing membership of the Oriental Society, whose membership lists reveal the names of many prominent politicians, scholars, and journalists. Around 300 people had joined by the summer of 1891; on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War the membership was almost 1,000. The fact that over the next decades these people, diverse in background, united in commitment, continued to interact in similar Asia groups lent consistency to Japan's outlook on the rest of Asia [Harrell 1992: 21].

The Oriental Society was dedicated to overcoming the information gap on Asia, thereby redirecting Japanese attention toward Asia and proclaiming the existence of an East Asian identity based on culture and script which were in use in China, Korea, and Japan —"Although we have people who are familiar with things from the faraway West, there are none with a thorough knowledge of conditions in the various Asian countries nearby" [Quoted in Harrell 1992: 21]. The Society published a monthly magazine, the Oriental Society Report (Toho kyokai hokoku), which contained material on the geography, economics, diplomacy, and history of Asian countries [Nihon May 9, 1891: 3]. In addition, the founders expressed their intention of sending study expeditions to various parts of Asia and establishing a library and a museum for the study of Asian culture. Ultimately the Society's purpose, as the Report described it, was to help Japan fulfill her mission of guiding the less developed countries of Asia, protecting them from Western powers, and contributing to world civilization.

The founders of the Oriental Society believed that Japan's identity must be defined in terms of her historical ties with Asia. The Japanese people must study their own things, said the first issue of the Report, and in order to do this they must also investigate the cultures of neighboring countries. Since the Restoration, the Japanese had so busied themselves in amassing knowledge of the West that they had neglected their own country and neighboring countries with whose destiny Japan's was most closely linked. As a consequence, the founders believed that Japanese scholars had to be independent for knowledge of Japan itself. For them, Japan's identity was also a matter of her geographical position, which bound her to the Asian continent: Japan's most important problem was deciding where her destiny lied. Europe and America were not areas where Japanese now could compete, owing to geographical position and inadequate strength. Asia was the place for Japanese progress [Pyle 1969: 156-160].



**5.1.3. *Miyazaki brothers: "Asia firsters"***

The Miyazaki brothers (Tamizō, Yazō, and especially Tōten [Torazō]) was born to a gōshi landlord family in Kyushu's Kumamoto Prefecture. Tōten (1870-1922) was the youngest son. One brother, Hachirō, was killed in the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877; two older brothers and two sisters survived to maturity. They came through the Freedom and People's Rights Movement of the 1880s and 1890s, with its idealism of human betterment, democracy, and social reform, while having intimate knowledge of the hardships of tenant life under the Meiji provisions for a regular monetized tax. In particular, Yazō emphasized the importance of a solution that would embrace all Asia, and not just Japan alone. In other words, he associated the human problem of hunger with the Asian problem of reform and of independence, and held that the problem of China was central to a solution of the problem of Asia and Japan and, indeed, of all mankind. Youngest Tōten did so under the influence of his brother, Yazō.

Tōten was an outstanding example of romantic Pan-Asianism who devoted some thirty years of his life to collaboration with Sun Yat-sen and Chinese nationalists, as a publicist, financier, supplier of arms, and combatants. Tōten was educated at a mission school as well as a private school run by the journalist Tokutomi Sohō. His education in nineteenth-century European liberalism was a guiding light for his equally revolutionary activities in Korea and the Philippines. Like many other Minken believers who professed Pan-Asianism, he approached international politics in terms of the nineteenth-century European liberalism of Giuseppe Mazzini's persuasion, upholding the view that democratic rights could and should be accorded to individual nations. For this to happen, however, the nations suffering under imperialism must first be liberated and must determine their own destinies. In such a process of national awakening, he saw Japan as being able to provide practical support, as he tried to show by his own example [Jansen 1984: 74-75; Hotta, 2007: 43-44; Takeuchi 1963: 44-48].

Tōten put his efforts and lives to redressing his government's determined "Europe first" policies of Westernization and escape from Asia. Being critical and distrustful of Japanese imperialism, Tōten's concern was with all mankind, and especially with Asia, and his goal was nothing less than the revival of Asia. He argued that Japan's future lay in Asia, and that it was tied to its Asian neighbors by traditions of culture, language, and race and could expect no final home in Westernization and escape from Asia that were increasingly causing traumatic identity crisis. Thus Japan and Asia's restoration to sovereignty and dignity depended upon the revival of China, its largest and most important state. In other words, solutions to the Japanese problem, the Asian problem, and in fact the world problem, all lay in China. China's resurrection from weakness and humiliation, however, would require a political and social revolution to free it from the shackle of the Manchu dynasty. That revolution, in turn, depended upon the identification of a hero who could call the country back to health and strength. Tōten along with his brother, Yazō, resolved to seek for a 'hero' who might be able to overthrow the old order and solve its social and political problems [Etō and Jansen 1982: xiii- xxviii].

As his My Thirty-Three Years Dream shows a romantic and often melancholy account of the fate of pure motives in the impure world of Japan and the failure of efforts to mount a revolution in south China at the end of the nineteenth century, Tōten's career revolved around his hero, Sun Yat-sen, and the Chinese revolution. Indeed, he was the most important of a small group of Japanese Pan-Asianists who devoted their lives to helping their Chinese friends overthrow the Manchu dynasty. Thus Tōten was a Byronian, or perhaps more accurately, Lafayettesque romantic because he saw the ousting as an essential first step in a world-wide crusade for freedom and justice in which his role was that of a chivalrous Lafayette to Sun Yet-sen's Washington. Resolved to infiltrate Chinese society and work closely with his hero, he tried to approach China through Korea, through Siam, where he led a group of immigrant farmers,

through the Philippines, where Aguinaldo was resisting the new American overlords, and finally through service with Sun Yat-sen, whose cause he served throughout the rest of his life [Etō and Jansen 1982: xiii-xxviii].

For other Japanese, an affiliation with the West should never be more than tactical. Japan's mission was to be an Asian power, and its autonomy and strength, once established in Western eyes, should be devoted to working out a role of leadership in Asian change against the West. This kind of Asian consciousness could easily converge with Japanese nationalism to encourage expansion, and many "Asia firsters" who began with a position of anti-government liberalism ended by urging their government to take a firmer line on the nearby continent. Tōten, however, did not. Although his career, like his interests, saw frequent overlap and occasional cooperation with advocates of national strength and national expansion, he reminded independent and distrustful of them. He was not won to the cause of Asia by popular sentiment in the Meiji period. He saw himself, romantically as always, as a chivalrous hero working for the colored races of mankind, and not as the servant of his country nor his emperor. A temporary government assignment made it possible for him to find Sun Yat-sen in 1897, but it was the government that facilitated his needs, and not he that served the Meiji government. Thus his life is a story of crusade for China and for Asia [Matsuzawa 1979: 100-104]. His story provides invaluable insights in modern Asian history concerning the psychological, social, and intellectual crisis of Meiji period and the Japanese intellectuals' response to it.

#### 5.1.4. *Okakura Tenshin*

Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzō; 1862–1913), a gifted art historian who studied with Ernest Fenollosa at Tokyo University, is usually referred to as the pioneer of Japanese Pan-Asianism and Japan's intellectual revolt against Westernization and escape from Asia [Benfey 2003: 75-108]. He formulated the most sophisticated and internationalist version of Pan-Asianism, calling for the resurgence of Asia in order to protect it from the plethora of Westernization and escape from Asia. He underlined the creative vitality of Chinese and Indian civilizations that had adapted to changing historical circumstances over millennia and attained high levels of maturity [Najita and Harootunian 1998: 211-212; Matsuzawa 1979: 13-44].

Okakura was born in Yokohama in 1862, three years after the commercial treaties had opened Japan to trade with the West. In the young age, his life was clearly divided into two halves: the first involved his studies of the English language and Western culture in Yokohama under the tutelage of men such as John Ballagh; the second introduced him to the writings of Confucius and Mencius, Chinese Poetry, and the fine art of calligraphy under the supervision of the priests of the Chōenji. This dual life led him to feel the sense of identity crisis—that is to say, to be aware that Japanese pre-modern identity had been seriously threatened by Westernization and escape from Asia. Like many of Pan-Asianists, therefore, Okakura pursued the universalism of Buddhism and Asian art as well as his Asian and Japanese skills and knowledge so as to overcome his identity crisis [Notehelfer 1990: 312-322].

Okakura [1984: 136] saw the international affairs of the late nineteenth century as a conflict between East and West, rejecting a Eurocentric notion of Enlightenment and universal civilization and taking the opinion that "the glory of Europe is the humiliation of Asia." He attributed European aggression to the "restless maritime instincts of the Mediterranean and Baltic, born of chase and war, of piracy and pillage" and contrasted it with the "continental contentment of agricultural Asia." For Okakura, it was not the decadent materialism of the West but rather the virility and energy of its own civilizational legacy that should become the basis of Asia's political revival, unity, and identity. Okakura, therefore, urged Asians to prepare themselves for an intellectual confrontation with the West by reviving their native civilizations, unity, and identity. In the meantime, Okakura was confident in his call for a return to and revival of Asia and a construction of regional identity, as his ideas were strongly inspired by the rising critiques against Western rationalism and materialism in Europe. The following passage from Okakura Tenshin's Ideals of the East reveals how closely the notion of a return to and a revival of Asian civilization, unity, and identity was tied to a perception of a larger crisis in European civilization: "Not only to return to our own past ideals, but also to feel and revivify the dormant life of the old Asiatic unity, becomes our mission. The sad problems of Western society turn us to seek a higher solution in Indian religion and Chinese ethics. The very trend of Europe itself, in German philosophy and Russian spirituality, in its latest developments, towards the East, assists us in the recovery of these nations themselves nearer to the stars in the night of their material oblivion" [Okakura 1903: 223].

Okakura's anti-colonial sensibilities and embrace of Asia as an alternative to the West rendered a meta-geographical image that sometimes included even the non-Buddhist parts of Asia. His Pan-Asianism had the most all-encompassing vision for both geographical and conceptual boundaries of Asia as a single group, being not based on the identity of the yellow race and Chinese culture but instead on a broad notion of Asian civilization, unity, and identity [Hotta 2007: 30; Takeuchi 1963: 43-44; Saeki 1973: 214; Matsumoto 1961: 87-98; Hiraishi 1994: 279-282]. For instance, "Asia is one," stated at the opening of Okakura's Ideals of the East, was frequently quoted and had enormous influence as an ideological inclination appealing for Asian civilization, unity, and identity, while demonstrating the principles that all Asians shared. Okakura [1903: 1] mentioned in his book, "The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas." But, he added, this geographical divide has not "interrupted" a common inheritance marked by a "love for the Ultimate and Universal." It was precisely this shared disposition for the ultimate and universal that had enabled Asians everywhere to produce the great religions of the world and to emphasize the ends, not the means, of life that distinguished the maritime civilizations of the West.

The originality of Okakura rested rather on his suggestion of an entirely new way for Asia to overcome identity crisis. He wanted Asia to apply a fundamentally different way beyond any tangible material measurements. Okakura preached that Asia could achieve the goal of self-awareness and external recognition by asserting itself as non-materialist entity, which was comparable, even aesthetically and morally superior to, the civilization of the West. Indeed, he found in the world of high culture a possibility of creating a common identity among Asians, and perhaps even more crucially, of gaining what they believed to be a deserved recognition from the West, that Asia was a civilization par excellence. In other words, he enunciated his belief that Asia was quite capable of resisting the temptation of being further "civilized" in the Western sense because Asia was, and always had been, a civilization on a par with Europe. He aspired to recognition without specifically calling for the achievement of material parity with the West, even much less achieving it by military means [Hotta 2007: 31-34].

### 5.2. Enigmatic Pan-Asianism

Most of the Japanese of the Meiji period were more preoccupied with developments in the West than in Asia, concluding that the only possible course for a modern Japan was to try to join the imperialist club and to escape itself from Asia. The Meiji government, therefore, opted not to invoke Pan-Asianism as a main ideology of its foreign policy. This was clearly displayed in the prevalence of the notion of Westernization and escape from Asia, which was popularized by the prominent writer and educator Fukuzawa Yukichi. The Pan-Asianism remained very much a minority concern by comparison with the strongly entrenched idea of Westernization and escape from Asia. However, the notion of Westernization and

escape from Asia in no way altered the conviction of the number of Pan-Asianists that Asian heritage, culture, and values not only had greater validity for them but also was infinitely superior to Western value-institutional systems. Rather it provoked Japanese intellectuals to revisit Asia to resolve identity crisis. It was in the light of such identity crisis that Pan-Asianism became increasingly an attractive ideology for many Japanese. Therefore, Pan-Asianism had never been isolated, and, after World War I and the advent of Taishō democracy, rather became relevant to the political arena in which they were constantly absorbed by politics and politicians, adjusted to suit political needs, and manipulated and exploited by various political actors. But, unfortunately, during these processes of transmission into politics, Pan-Asianism was surely changed, challenged, and preempted by a style of narrow nationalist sentiment that was more conservative and exclusive than the early and romantic Pan-Asianists had ever been.

In the background of the critical change throughout the dissemination into politics, a variety of proximate factors were involved. Among them was social and ideological condition in the domestic level of Japan; so called, the socialism and its movement. Socialism, not only alien in its origin for Japanese but also more radical in its tendency of seeking for the rejection of pre-modern traditions and institutions than modernism in Meiji era, had much impact on the identity of Japanese in Taisho and early Showa era and gave rise to many mental as well as physical reactions. Other key factor was Japan's embarrassing experiences and uncertainties in the international level. For example, having moved against German possession in China during World War I, Japan was with great pleasure payed back with a seat as one of the 'Big Five' powers at the Paris Peace Conference (1919). But Japan came out of that conference with deep discontentment. In particular, disturbing of Japan was the vain debate to include the clauses guaranteeing racial equality and religious freedom [Hotta, 2007: 68-71]. In addition, more strain was put on relations between Japan and the United States, when the US anti-Japanese Immigration Act went into effect on 1 July 1924. The reaction from Japan was strong and widespread. What was humiliating for the Japanese elite was that the Japanese continued to face discrimination on the basis of their identification with the yellow race and Asian culture and Japan was hypocritically excluded from the Eurocentric international order in the context of the permanent racial and civilizational superiority of the West over yellow race in spite of Japan's civilized status and proven record of Westernization [Hirobe 2001].

The above-mentioned condition and experiences had a huge impact on the psychology of Japanese elites. At last, Pan-Asianism was employed and adopted by bureaucrats and political organizations with mostly right-wing political tendencies. For example, the type of anti-Western, anti-imperialis thought that penetrated Okakura's work such as The Awakening of the East was seen as useful by Japanese ultra-nationalists who saw in it a rationalization for Japan's aggressive policy in Asia, considering Japan as fighting for Asian and against the West. At last, by the end of the 1930s, while espousing similar principles of interventionism and expansionism, Pan-Asianism turned into a means to justify Japanese imperialism, enjoyed the legitimacy of a viable political construct within Japan, and became an integral part of Japanese identity. Pan-Asianism culminated in the concept of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, launched in 1940 on the eve of the invasion of Southeast Asia [Peattie 1984: 21-22; Jansen 1965: 75; Pyle 1969: 185-187; Saaler 2007: 14-15; Hotta, 2007: 62; Notehelfer 1990: 331; Narangoa and Cribb, 2003: 16-17; McCormack 2001: 166; Takeuchi 1963: 59-62; Oka 1961: 74-77; Maruyama 1964: 57]. In a nutshell, the Pan-Asianists' original ideals, which can be viewed as an idealistic and mostly cultural regionalism based on cultural common Asian identity, was in the end dismayed by the growth of militarism and jingoism in Japan and were distorted and used for the aims of the militaristic Japanese state.



### 5.3. Pan-Asianists' Ambiguous Identity

Pan-Asianism became central to the Japanese construction of the new Asian identity, premising a regional identity as Asians upon the distinction between Asia and the West. This kind of regional identity arose as a reaction to identity crisis posed by Westernization and escape from Asia. Furthermore, when exposed to aggressive expansionist threat from the West as well as obsession with Westernization and attempt to escape from Asia, Pan-Asianists were motivated by their communal identity as Asian, believing they should work together for the common goal of regional identity and unity. But as a matter of fact, Pan-Asianism tended to be ambivalent about a regional identity and unity. This was due, on the one hand, to a need to construct a regional Asian identity as a response to the Westernization and escape from Asia and, on the other hand, to a tendency for Japan to claim leadership and supremacy in Asia. Pan-Asianists identified the Japanese identity with that of Asia, but they also held that Japan was to inherit its identity from Asia, to develop it, and to champion it in Asia. In other words, since Asia was weak, they concurred that something had to be done about it and that it ultimately had to be done by Japan, who was in a relatively better-off position than the rest, proclaiming Japan's special mission to lead and protect East Asia [Hotta, 2007: 49; Muto, 2001: 173; Aydin, 2007: 76].

Indeed, Pan-Asianists were interested first and foremost in the identity of Japan, and implicitly possessed the assumption of Japanese superiority in all spiritual, cultural, and material spheres over other Asian nations. Thus even members of Seikyosha and Okakura did not hesitate to extol Japan's superior perspective over other Asian nations. Miyake, Shiga, and Kuga, for instance, called for Japanese expansion into the surrounding world through a cultural mission designed to convince others of Japan's cultural genius [Notehelfer 1990: 329]. It would be far-fetched to say that even Okakura's all-embracing art historical, philosophical incarnation was an ideology dissociated from Japan's exclusive national identity. Okakura pictured Japan as the leader of Asian resistance and, in essence, the living "museum" or spiritual "repository" of Asia as well. It was as if the incomplete spiritual components of Asia had achieved a higher Hegelian synthesis in Japan. Okakura mentioned, "Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization; and yet more than a museum because the singular genius of the race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past, in the spirit of living Adwaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old" [Okakura 1903: 7-8]. What most of Pan-Asianists shared, therefore, was their identification with the nation, the concept of a national mission, and the further conviction that Japan's identity was about to burst forth into the broader world. Thus, identity, superiority and mission of Japan appeared to be the integral parts of Pan-Asianists [Notehelfer 1990: 311, 329].

Whereas Pan-Asianism served as the foundation for the necessity of the regional identity, it seemed to legitimize or even to call for a Japanese leadership and cultural mission in Asia. Over time, Japanese ultra-national identity prevailed, and proclamation of Asian brotherhood was turned into slogans to justify Japanese aggression in Asia. Furthermore, ironically, Japanese Pan-Asianist search for a regional identity, while clinging increasingly to their national unique identity and mission in Asia, had the general effect of feeding the fires of national identities in Asia rather than encouraging to create a regional identity [Peattie 1984: 24-25, 38-43].

## 6. Conclusion

It may be appropriate to conclude this article with a few over-all considerations which bear on crisis of identify in Japan's modern and contemporary epoch. Let me set forth briefly some of the salient points suggested in this article:

Firstly, throughout the modern Japanese history, Japan in the formation of identity has been engaged in a great pendulum-like swing away from and toward Asia, a movement interactive with specific ideological trend. In its reactions to the West, Japan followed the historic stages characteristic of extremes of "obsession and rejection" and failure of "reconciliation." As we have seen above, for example, there was much oscillation between the West and Asia. The Meiji period of extensive Westernization and escape from Asia was followed by period of "reentry into Asia" during which obsession, humiliation, fear, frustration, and insecurity having led to identity crisis were dealt with and Japan put gradually emphasis on its pursuit of Pan-Asianism. More specifically speaking, during the industrial and social revolutions that followed the Meiji Restoration, Japanese leaders spoke confidently of "escaping from Asia" and "entering Europe" but this pattern was reversed in the twentieth century. Now leaders urged a "reentry into Asia" and an "abandonment of Europe." This situation, however, led to a decrease in the feeling of closeness on the part of Japan's supporters of "datsuaron" towards the West on the one hand, and Pan-Asianists in Japan lost their feelings of solidarity towards Asia on the other hand. This constellation brought about by the special dynamics of "escape from Asia" and "reentry into Asia" has been at the origin of today's Japanese identity crisis. Torn between the idealized poles of the West and Asia, the Japanese search for their identity has been an elusive affair and this pendulum-like oscillation has led to Japan's political, social, and cultural isolation in Asia.

Secondly, the experiences of the Meiji Japan demonstrate the type of logical relationship between identity crisis and ideology that tends to accompany the identification process. The greater part of the Meiji governmental establishment concluded that the only possible course for survival of Japan was to try to westernize itself in Western imagination and to join the West and distance itself from Asia. The Japanese Westernization and escape from Asia seemed to be successful in creating an efficient centralized government and developing a modern economy and a strong army. Parallel to these achievements produced by Japanese Westernization and escape from Asia, however, the Japanese faced fundamental questions about their identity, Japan's relationship with its neighbors, and the limits of Japanese Westernization. It can be said that the extremes of attraction to Westernization and escape from Asia were related psychological phenomena, that is to say, identity crisis, because those experiences led to the uncertainty, confusion, frustration, humiliation, and fear etc. The Meiji intellectuals attempted naturally to respond to identity crisis by producing Pan-Asianism which had played a dynamic and creative role in resolving identity crisis. Therefore, Pan-Asianism was fostered in response to identity crisis, while it grew in close association with the Meiji Japan's identity crisis. But, the original value and orientation of Pan-Asianism were misused most forcefully by imperial Japan. The original ideals of same race and same culture against imperialism changed very much when they were put to use. The Greater East Asian Coprosperity Sphere based on Pan-Asianism was little more than an "organized hypocrisy" [Krasner 2000: 66]. Japan was just as imperialist as the European.

After a relatively brief and particle experimentation, therefore, early Pan-Asianism seemed ultimately to fail to provide the structure for the next greater form of identification so as to resolve identity crisis. In other words, Pan-Asianists appeared to have failed to lock their identity in a reconstructed identity—harmonious, humane, compassionate, tolerant, and cosmopolitan—by linking their identity to Asia. There seemed to be lacking a generally accepted framework of universal values on which Pan-Asianists could base their arguments. According to Maruyama's perspective comment [Quoted in Jansen, 1965: 81], the failure to develop transcendental ideals of Japan and the poverty and limitations of Pan-Asianism made it easy to promote, and combine with, the ideologies of family state and divine nation. Just the thought and behavior of most Pan-Asianists reflected the ongoing process of Japanese identity crisis. Identity crisis appeared almost ceaselessly to emerge no better off with the jolting experiences. Furthermore, the subversion and degradation of the Pan-Asianism of the Meiji period lead for the part of neighbor countries to be skeptical about the prospects for even today's Japanese expressions of Asianism [McCormack, 2001: 166].



Thirdly, from Meiji to contemporary Japan, one conspicuous feature of the Japanese scene in the cycle of the formation of identify is the prevalence of a discussion carried on in terms of self-awareness and self-identification. In other words, Japan passed through crises of identity in the periods of the Meiji and war, but the general syndrome of having to synthesize social realities and needs with psychological realities and needs has been present in all history from post-war period to this day. The awareness of being different, of facing discontinuities of unique proportions, of suffering, and of agony—that is to say, identity crisis—seems to be constant in much of Japan's history. Therefore, it is necessary to have a more subtle and broadly-based understanding of the dynamics of change and interrelationship between identity crisis and ideology over a period of time. What is needed is to make sure whether or not aspect of the Meiji Japan's experience with identity crisis and ideology can find parallels in the experiences of contemporary periods.

Postwar Japan's identity crisis, for instance, mainly stems from defeat in the Pacific War and U.S. occupation. Japan's unconditional surrender to the United States and American occupation are the significant sources of postwar Japanese identity crisis. Indeed, the postwar era has been an era in which Japan has been forced to embrace America as the dominant model. Model which Japan has been compelled to seek out is identified with concrete characteristics of America. Japan, therefore, resumed an even more thoroughgoing Westernizing path, that is, Americanization. Postwar Japanese identity crisis has been bound by its images of America which have provoked in the Japanese the feelings of "shame and envy" [Tamamoto, 2003: 205]. Most Japanese thinkers are agreed that Japan lacks shutaisei. Caught between Asia and America as model of shutaisei, Japanese thought on identity floundered, unable to reconcile the two. Miyoshi Masao [Quoted in Tamamoto, 2003: 204-5], a Japanese-born naturalized American arid literary critic, offers clarification: "The uncritical pursuit of shutaisei in Japan may be still one more example of Japan's gestures toward Westernization, and thus ironically proof of its lack of shutaisei." In the postwar world, as a result, Japan has to continue defining and redefining its identity, experiencing relentless identity crisis.

Against this identity crisis, Japanese leaders including Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru provided their country-men with "economism": an ideology of Japan as a "merchant nation" (shonin kokka)—a country that institutionalized a national consensus on economic growth while concentrating on economic development and eschewing the pursuit of military power. With this economism, Japanese leaders believed that identity crisis could be resolved when Japanese economy based on advanced technology, permanent employment, industrious labors, and well-built middle class, become world prosperous and competitive. In addition, Yoshida attempted to subvert the Left's pacifism: an ideology of Japan as a "peace nation," a nation dedicated to the pacifist ideals of the Japanese constitution [Berger 1996: 336-343; Katzenstein 1998: 30]. As a consequence, notably since the early 1960s, Japan at large had become increasingly associated with material culture, instant pleasure, the production and consumption of things, concentrating energies on the areas in which it enjoyed a comparative advantage: trade, technology, and economic growth. In the 1980s, at last, Japan's nominal per capita gross national product surpassed that of most of the West including America. As Japan's own ascendance in the world economy boosted national confidence, Japan appeared to be able to identify, after a long time and successfully, itself as a member of the "G-7," allowing it to assume a rightful place in a club whose members share the world's highest per

capita incomes. This identification, therefore, seemed to allow Japan to free itself from never-ending identity crisis [Tamamoto 2003: 209].

Yet, the end of the Cold War, the emergence of a post-modern state, the globalizing world, and the lost decades open to new questions of identity of Japanese. Firstly, as British diplomat Robert Cooper in his book The Breaking of Nations describes Japan as a 'post-modern' state or the post-Westphalian nation-state, Japan is more closely resembling the states in the EU which submit deliberately sovereign rights to regional/international norms and rule and attempt to soften national identity: "It has self-imposed limits on defense spending and capabilities. It is no longer interested in acquiring territory nor in using force. It would probably be willing to accept intrusive verification. It is an enthusiastic multilateralist" [Cooper 2003: 41]. But unfortunately Japan, surrounded by 'modern' states including a rising China which provoke willingly their national identity, is experiencing identity crisis or ambiguity between modern identity and post-modern identity. Secondly, the globalizing world and the lost decades make it more and more difficult to discuss Japanese identity only within the framework of nation-state. Many of younger Japanese today, for instance, are not at all interested in what Japan is as a nation, nor what kinds of role their county has to play in the world or regional community. It seems that as its domestic sluggishness is being proliferated along with the decline of secure job opportunity and the increasing sense of alienation among Japanese, so-called disconnected society (muen syakai), young Japanese are failing to seek for their sense of identity in local/national/regional/global community.

Finally, an identity formation, as Erikson points out, is a procedure of uninterrupted crisis and resolution from early childhood through youth and adult to the elderly. Naito Konan who was best known as a founder of the Kyoto School of Sinology as well as a new member in the Seikyosha in November 1890, also argues that the life of a nation is largely similar to the life of a man. It is seldom realized that behind Naito's achievement lay the several years in the Seikyosha. Like many of his contemporaries, Naito was plagued by the contemporary problem of having to find Japanese as well as regional Asian identity in this time of identity crisis. Naito held that just as Chinese civilization could be born, mature, and decline, so could Japan's, and the evolution of the two organisms was joined through the shift of the Oriental cultural centre from China to Japan, which was inevitable. Naito [Quoted in Tam 1977: 206] argued:

> The difference between China and Japan today comes from their different stages in this life. However, had Japan lived through the age of China, Japan would be another China, and China would be another Japan had the reverse been also true.

Ironically and interestingly enough, indeed, the distinction between China and Japan, as Naito points out, originates in their dissimilar phases in the history. Japan had flowered between 1870 and 1930 in an era of state-building, and between 1960 and 1980 in a period of the economic boom. However, China bore the mark of state-collapse between 1870 and 1930 and the political disturbance between 1960 and 1980. Japan had become strong because she was in a different developmental stage in her history from that of China. Comparing Japan and China today, it is obvious that China is rising as Japan is in decline politically and economically. Indeed, Japan seemed, finally, to be part of the West, removing its constant source of identity crisis. However, as soon as Japan arrived at its goal and seemed to resolve its identity, Japan lost its way. Japan seems to have the future, but it does not seem to have the image of future. The simple fact is that Japan is old, mature, sophisticated and, not sure but maybe, close to the end of its glorious and sublime history, while China is young, unsophisticated, and has just started its new era. The Asian cultural centre has been shifting again from Japan to China. Japanese civilization has been born and mature and will be decline, just as China has been, as Naito mentions.



It is obvious that today's Japan is, and will be, far from being at the end of history. Japan may be on the threshold of the end of the era of Japanese glory. It certainly appears that Japanese glory has been challenged. Its glory is being neutralized by its neighbors, its economic power is progressively being weakened, the utility and appeal of Japanese working ethics and values ebb, and its internal disturbances are increasing beside the aged issue and the soaring feeling of isolation between Japanese. The tremendous effort, ambition, success, expansion, total defeat, recovery, and prosperity of the late 19th and 20 centuries have left Japan fatigued and exhausted. Twenty-first century Japanese seem to become less confident than their nineteenth and twentieth century ancestor had been.

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